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U.S. Air Force Academy Oral History Interview #116 Edward G. Lansdale

United States Air Force Academy

U. S. AIR FORCE ACADEMY
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

116

EDWARD G. LANSDALE

25 April 1971

CONDUCTED BY

THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

USAF ACADEMY COLORADO

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ABSTRACT: 1941 - 63. World War II Office of Strategic Service and Military Intelligence Service; visits Indonesia and Philippines; observes Filipino resistance to Japanese; meets Emilio Aguinaldo; observes Chinese guerrilla activities in early 1950s; meets Ramon Magsaysay; resurgence of Huk movement in 1960s; travels to South Vietnam in 1953 and observes French at Dien Bien Phu; discusses French-American cooperation; observations on USAF bombing of North Vietman.

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E.G. Hansdale
(Signature)

29 October 1971

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Interviewee: Major General Edward Lansdale
Date: 25 April 1971

Q: Gen Lansdale, would you tell us how you first became involved in military affairs? What was your direction that brought you into the Army, and what were you doing when you first joined the Army?

A: I was in an advertising agency in San Francisco when World War II started. I was really past the age of being drafted, and especially since I had children, and both status and age were keeping me out. But, I wanted to do something to help the country in the war, I tried to get involved in some type of service, I started off initially with the Office of Strategic Services as an intelligence collector for them, and after working at that for a time, I was picked up also by the Military Intelligence Service of the U.S. Army. For a time after as a civilian during the war, I was working for both O.S.S. and M.I.S. I was told at one time by Wild Bill Donovan, who was head of the O.S.S., that I was the only individual so employed by both services at the same time. There was an amount of rivalry between them. But in 1943, the M.I.S. wanted me to spend most of my time serving them so I was commissioned as a first lieutenant. I'd been a reserve officer years before, out of college ROTC, but had resigned. They picked up my old commission finally in 1943 and renewed it as a first lieutenant. From then on I was serving for M.I.S.

Q: What was the nature of the intelligence community when you first got involved with it? Was it sort of a makeshift operation or had they really had firm plans for how they were going to gather their intelligence?

A: Well they had many plans of course on how they were to gather intelligence, but I don't think the United States was really ready for a global conflict such as World War II and the needs of the conflict in the way of very basic information in geography terrain maps, man-made features on the terrain, the people involved, the vast and hitherto almost unknown places were we were putting forces. This put a tremendous demand on the United States to come up with information to be used by top headquarters and in theater commands. Part of the work was almost like being an editor of the National Geographic Magazine in that we collected photographs of not only airstrips and beaches for landings but also roads and bridges and more pedestrian types of geographic information. We also went into details on people who lived in places, their potentials for helping our troops, potentials for collecting information about Japanese, about Germans, and so on.

Q: This information gathering, did you just start with one piece of information and then say, we could use a little more about this area, and just start growing and growing as you became more involved and discovered that there were things you could find out that would be useful?

A: There were known gaps in information. All of the

intelligence services of the military and the O.S.S. at the time had priorities on what they needed to know. Then they would list the gaps of the information by countries and by subject areas so that in effect, there was a very large gazette listing unknown but desired information. We would try to get this information from people. I interviewed folks who had been in foreign areas, such as scientists, geologists, ichthyologists, and others. We would sort of mentally take them through their experiences in these countries to not only cover their own subject areas, but also tell us about the people they knew and the conditions as they were when last seen and so on. For example, one of them was a person like Bailey Willis, who was the professor emeritus of geology at Stanford University. He was the only American we knew who had been in Okinawa when the Japanese were holding it as a mandate. He had talked the Japanese Imperial Navy into letting him go there as a geologist just before World War II started. He had walked through the territory and knew it. Well a person such as Willis would just be invaluable, not only to describe the terrain, but also to say whether the Japs had done this or that. Did you see any defenses? What are the harbors like? The beaches? Would the people be going along with the Japanese or would they resist if given the chance? Many questions immediately spring to mind, so that in talking with a person such as that, you'd have a map out and be filling in any details that you didn't have. You'd have your aerial photos and be doing, in effect, photo interpretation: What the hell is that square thing there or the squiggly thing or whatever? He'd usually know and fill you in on the details. Aside from that, given the

nature of the conflict, you'd say, where else have you been? And then you'd quickly discover that a person such as that had been up in the Sing Ling Shan Mountains of China, had done surveys in many other places. One thing I picked up information for the Navy from Bailey Willis not only about the Pacific Ocean, the Pacific Basin which he knew very well, but places like the Sargasso Sea. He had many clues that would help locate submarine refueling spots in the ocean that could be passed very quickly to the Office of Naval Intelligence. Each individual, in effect, was a gold mine if the interviewer was a good miner and knew how to go after such things.

Q: During World War II you had occasion to visit with tribal groups on occasion. Would you describe how this came about and the effect.

A: The Indonesians, the Sumatrans from Indonesia, were the sailors of Indonesia and had gone aboard Dutch ships which were helping the Allied effort in all oceans, particularly their merchant ships, transports, freighters, to back up our war effort. The Office of Naval Intelligence and the British at one point got word that the Indonesian seamen aboard these Dutch ships had heard Queen Wilhelmina's broadcast of her support of the Declaration of the Four Freedoms by Roosevelt and Churchill. Hearing this, they decided that they too were part of the four freedoms and they were all going to quit and go home and have their own freedom in Indonesia. This was at the time the Japanese were just coming down into Indonesia and proclaiming it

independent and forcing Indonesia into their Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. The Navy didn't have enough exact information on how many of the sailors were ready to strike, to desert, and so on. I was asked to help in this since I seemed to get along very well with Asians in the work that I had done. I managed to meet various of the Indonesian seamen in port and I had drinking bouts with them and at one of these I was rather exuberantly made a member of the Batok tribe of Sumatra. The Batoks, among the seamen, from then on kept me very well advised on what their plans were and also listened to me as I talked them out of having a strike and to continue on in the war effort until the day of victory when they could realize the four freedoms at that time. This type of working with tribes also extended to various European groups. I remember that I got in with a number of Andalusian emigrants who were against the Axis tie-in with Franco and who were willing to help the Allied effort. Also any place abroad where there were Andalusians, I got into correspondance with them to help our effort. Perhaps these Andalusians had been sheep-herders at home, but as they left home and went abroad they became laborers or menials in households. We suddenly had a whole group of chauffeurs and house boys and gardeners situated next to very significant and prominent leaders of various nations, such as ambassadors and consul generals and so forth around the world, whose households were suddenly no longer safe for secrets. This made a considerable network at the time. This was years ago and I forget what all I was doing and what networks I set up. I would do the original recruiting

and setting them up but I wouldn't run them too much. They kept using me to go out getting new information and meet new people all the time, which seemed to be my forte.

Q: You said you had contacts with the agents. Is there any reason, do you think, looking back, why you were able to communicate or be effective with the agents?

A: I don't know what it was, except that to me people have always been people, and an individual has always been an individual regardless of the color of his skin or his race or his language.

I have puzzled about this a great deal in my life, Asians have told me that I had always dealt with and had given them their dignity when I dealt with them. They said that it was rare that a person would see them as real human beings. To me there has never been anything else but that.

I grew up in California, in a place where the Asians were a minority that had a very rough time. And I presume not having joined in with the majority's denigration of the minority, and having known a number of Japanese and Philippinos when I was in school, along with Mexicans and all the rest of the minority groups in California, and still treating them as individuals, this helped.

But I don't know what it is, I really don't.

Q: Are you linguistically able to . . .

A: No, not at all. I have a very bad ear for languages, and I have a very bad tongue for them. But having spent

many years among foreign people who don't know English and only picking up a few rudiments of a foreign language, I've had to depend a great deal on a look of empathy, a physical look, and an ability to try to communicate without words -- acting out things, and somehow or other getting the touch of one human being with another. I don't know what you would call it, but people respond to smiles, to an interest in their well being, even if you can't speak their way. If you've got a look that somehow or other they can read, why you can communicate with them.

I remember once in the Philippines I spent hours with a Negrito, who was the president of a tribe living just beyond the bombing range on Clark Air Force Base. This was in 1945, just at the end of the war, I was trying to find out what had happened to the remnants of a Japanese armored column that had gone up in the hills. This president with some of his tribal men showed up at my camp. I cooked them up a dinner. His one word of English was Okay, and I knew two or three words from a little handbook I had of Tagalog. But, he didn't know Tagalog. So we had a time in trying to talk to each other. This problem was finally solved by each of us drawing pictures in the sand and by acting out parts. I finally gathered that Americans had done something to his daughter, and very specifically he showed me that the Americans had done it to his daughter's belly. So I figured that some GI had wondered up there, (and mind you, the Negritos are only about 3 to 4 feet high, pygmies), some GI must have really been hungry for a girl, and had done whatever had happened to his daughter. But after three or four hours of talk he started shaking his head, that his daughter wasn't pregnant, and this wasn't the trouble, there was

something else. Finally, after hours of laboriously trying to communicate, I discovered that Americans had set up 155 artillery, and had been killing this Japanese armored column that was going to get up into the Zamrales range and get away from the 155s. He had been caught up in the draw there, and his daughter had been out getting vegetables, and a 155 went right through her belly, and she had been killed. With that I took off my GI watch that I had, and I strapped it on the wrist of the tribal president, as an expression of an American's sympathy about his daughter. He seemed pleased.

I showed him how to wind the watch and how to listen to it. He didn't know how to tell time, but I showed him, and every time the sun went down he would wind the watch each day, so it would run for 24 hours. I have a hunch that he still has the watch up there.

I went up some years afterwards to the range, during the Huk Campaign.

I could never find the same particular group, the same tribal group. But I ran across others, and they had all heard about this watch. It was all over the mountain range about this American who had given the watch to the person whose daughter had been killed by the artillery. This is, I presume, an art of communication.

At times I have had Americans or others with me as interpreters who were almost bilingual, or at least were rated excellent from a language school, and yet their empathy was flat. Some of them had picked up the manners of instructors or others, an outward show of superiority towards "natives". They were able to use the language far more readily than I ever was, and yet their manner caused people to freeze up. They lacked friendliness or something.

This quality would almost immediately be felt by these people who would react by becoming ultra cautious or circumspect in what they said.

I recall another case. Around '66 or '67, I was up near Danang taking a look at the Marine Corps pacification campaign in Vietnam -- a very excellent campaign that they were doing.

I accompanied one of the Marine Corps generals who invited me to go through a village with him. He had his staff along, and walking through the village, the Marines followed their handbook on this very same point of communicating with the natives. In parade ground voices they would shout "chao ong," which means hello.

The villagers would be looking out of the doors and windows of the doors and windows of their huts. I'm sure the Marines didn't realize what "big" voices they had to the ears of the villagers. In turn you could just see the villagers taking in their breath to shout that same word back to these Marines, figuring that shouting must be an American habit.

There was communication going on, but on seeing the villagers breathing in deeply in order to be able to yell back, the situation tickled my funnybone. I got to grinning. Seeing me finding this situation as funny as apparently they did too, they started grinning back at me. Then some came out of their houses and started walking along with me -- to watch other villagers in the street take in big breaths for the exchange of shouted hellos with the Marines. As with most simple comedy, the repetition got funnier as we walked along.

Finally we got to the end of the village. The Marine

Corps general looked around, and here I was with all the villagers, and we were all laughing, and walking along, and he said, "How did you do it?" I asked, "How did I do what?" He said, "You haven't spoken a single word, and yet you've got all the villagers with you. Something is funny -- what are you laughing at?" And I said, "I really don't want to tell you. We just found something funny here among ourselves, and this is the way we speak or communicate with each other."

Whatever it is, it's a quality of seizing a moment of life, maybe, and sharing it with people. It's seeing them as humans, and I couldn't have done it in this particular case, which I hadn't thought about at all, unless I had seen them as being human and having a sense of humor, the whole bit -- sharing just a moment of fun with them.

Q: Could you tell us something about the Japanese occupation of the Philippines, and how you became involved in the program?

A: I went into the Philippines actually as an intelligence officer for the invasion of Japan. I got in right at the end of the liberation of the Philippines -- they were finishing up that campaign and starting to get ready for the main Japanese islands.

The war ended. I found that I had considerable free time on my hands. I was a major at the time, and nobody quite knew what to do with me. I managed to find myself a jeep, and I took off and started driving around, (there

are some very beautiful places in the Philippines) and seeing what was going on, once in a while helping out as there would be a small Japanese unit still running around up in the boondocks, joining in with the infantry, ours and the local Filipinos, trying to locate these guys, and either get them to surrender, or often we didn't ask them to surrender, we just took care of them on the spot.

Then I was assigned to the G-2 staff of AFWESPAC (Armed Forces, Western Pacific), where I formed a "positive intelligence" staff section for the G-2 -- Col Bishop at the time -- that would collect current information about the conditions in the command's area of responsibility, particularly the Philippines. My staff section was called the Intelligence Division.

Later I carried out explorations of the Ryukyus islands north of Okinawa, at war's end, gathering current information for use by military government or whatever custodianship might be set up for that remote area.

I commandeered a small Japanese fishing boat in Okinawa, with its crew. Then, with three enlisted men and myself aboard, we went all through the northern Ryukyus, visiting each island. I talked to the people and learned of the conditions there -- the condition of crops, the living conditions of the people, harbors, about landing places, roads and how the Japanese military were getting out at the time, and what we might have to contend with as a military government eventually.

The AFWESPAC area was large. I didn't get down to Indonesia at the time, or down to New Guinea at all, but I did manage to get to many of the islands in the Philippines.

Mind you, there are 7000 islands there, and it kept me very busy getting around places.

I'd go by air and sea and overland, and I got to know the Philippines quite well.

I had discovered the many bands of dissidents on the island of which the Huks were only one. There were large bandit groups at the time who picked up weapons on the battle field or had weapons and had discovered a far easier way to make a living with a gun than having to work for it. Finally we did a survey, I had my staff do a survey, of conditions throughout the Philippines that wound up in about 14 compendium type of reports to the U.S. government. They told of conditions, economic and social and law and order or security type conditions throughout the Philippines. In 1946 as the Philippines was trying to figure out how they were going to be able to handle independance, my reports were just being completed by my staff and myself. I asked permission of the U.S. government to let me give them to the Philippine government, which they did. These reports became the subject of Philippine cabinet deliberation and also were used as sort of starting studies by the U.S. War Damage Commission and many other U.S. groups that were starting up economic aid and other help to the Philippines, at the end of the war.

Q: Sir, from your observations, what was the Japanese Occupation like? It seemed like initially the greater Southeast Asian CO-Prosperity spirit might have been a very popular thing with some of the Asian people.

A: It was a popular thing for the ambitious Asians which

the Japanese were very much aware of and would exploit be getting close to the more ambitious political figures in Asia, the Philippines and elsewhere and giving them a chance to be president or cabinet minister or to advance politically. This of course was very gratifying to the Asians to be given that chance. Then in the Philippines a rather unique thing happened. In trying to find out what it was, and this incidentally is in my book, the Philippine politicians that I talked to and the Philippine resistance leaders who were friends of mine were frequently put on the spot by me in trying to find out why they behaved differently at a moment when the United States had been defeated in the Philippines. They were left on their own, the Japanese were in their midst, with a very alluring promise of "you can go it on your own". Whether they were believed or not would be a factor. Whether there were any feelings of loyalty to the United States was a factor and so on. I tried very hard. Why was there so much resistance in the Philippines to the Japanese? Almost all of them told me a story and I don't know whether it's a true story or not, but I take it as the truth because the Filipinos believed it to the point of risking their lives in the belief that it was true. They all told me, and I heard this from many different sources, about an incident in the last days of Corregidor, before President Quezon and General MacArthur left Corregidor and went down to Australia, in the days when things looked very bleak. (The U.S. forces in Luzon had been driven back into Bataan and onto Corregidor, the Japanese had put their armed forces throughout the islands and had taken all of the main cities

and all of the main harbors and ports and so forth.) Quezon used the Corregidor radio to radio to send a message to President Roosevelt. Quezon pointed out that they had had an honorable agreement getween the Philippine Commonwealth and the U.S., a pact of common defense, in which they would be side by side against a common enemy. But the common enemy, the Japanese, had invaded the Philippines, were occupying most of it, and had, through bombing, artillery, and infantry brought great desolation to the Philippines. The people were under the guns and bayonets of an enemy. Quezon, as President of the Commonwealth, felt that the time had come when he had to make a decision about continuing on with the agreement with the U.S. to defend the Philippines. He said that if he continued it, it would only bring increasing suffering to his people. Reluctantly, as the leader of his people, he felt that he should ask now to be relieved of his promise to continue fighting with the Americans, now that the battle was practically over and they had lost. I've never seen the message back from the White House, but it's gospel truth to all the Filipinos who then risked their lives after that. They said a message came back, signed by Roosevelt, that said that we understood the conditions in the Philippines and we Americans also didn't want the Filipinos to suffer the consequences of the defense of that country; however, we Americans had promised to defend the Philippines and as long as one American was left alive, we were going to stick with our promise. We would try to do our best to help them and wouldn't go back on our promise but Quezon was free to do what he wanted.

Well, the Filipinos are very sentimental and emotional. Word of this, that the Americans as long as one American was left alive, would be true to their word, would still try to defend and help the Philippines, got out throughout the Philippine islands. When the Filipinos heard this, they thought, "Well, think of the shame if we stop ourselves now! Here are people who really aren't of us, but are dying while trying to defend us. They're sticking to their word, so we've got to keep going too." And this was what they tried to do in the war. The occupation of the Philippines by the Japanese had to change its character because of this. The Japanese were plagued from then on with guerrilla raids, by insurrections, by all sorts of troubles, sabotage continuously, slowdowns from work and all types of things that are very hard to put a finger on but which made Japanese tenure in the islands most difficult. I say it was a unique thing because the same type of thing didn't happen in any of the other places the Japanese occupied. They got along much better with many other people than they ever did in the Philippines. They had a very difficult and continuing task during the entire war in keeping the Philippines pacified enough for them to carry out their military work there. This was mostly as a support base for various operations further on. They had naval bases there, air bases, supply dumps, and what not. The Japanese, all during the occupation of the Philippines, had a rough time of it. Their political police -- the Kempetai -- devised methods of population control. One was a "neighborhood association" in which people were supposed to inform on neighbors, with penalties for not

doing so, and with leading citizens being held responsible -- sort of as hostages to the state. Not too unlike the totalitarian measures of Nazi occupation in Europe.

But none of this was really successful during the war, because the population largely remained loyal to Americans and to the Filipinos who were resisting the Japanese (as the friends of the Americans in this war.)

Q: Sir, Emilio Aguinaldo became in the eyes of some a collaborator, although he claims that he was doing it to modify the effects of occupation. What is your feeling about his role during the Second World War and the occupation?

A: He, and a number of others who were accused of behavior in precisely the same manner, and who were prominent Filipinos, I believe actually took risks to help, at least in their own minds. I think they would lie in bed at night worrying about whether they would live through the next day or not, and in their own mind they were really trying to help, I believe them on that. Some of these leaders actually were helping to get supplies to the guerrillas who were fighting the Japanese, were helping to hide information from the Japanese, were hiding individuals who were escaping from the Japanese, and were risking their lives to do so.

Now one of these became President afterwards -- Roxas. He was an individual who some Filipinos claimed had collaborated far more than most Filipinos, but whom other Filipinos I talked to (guerrillas and so forth) said had helped them. They needed people to play a role close

to the Japanese and keep tabs on what the Japanese planned for controlling population, so that they could take countermeasures and keep safe and keep operating.

But it's very hard to go in after an event and determine precisely what a guy has in his heart at the time. But I do feel that many of these people -- Aguinaldo, Roxas and the others -- actually were trying to help the Resistance against the occupation, and doing it in the one way that was really open to them to do it.

Q: Did you ever meet Aguinaldo?

A: Yes.

Q: What's your personal evaluation of the man, in connection with the early resistance of the 1900s?

A: When I met him, he was a patriarchal figure. I had lunch with him and his granddaughter one day. I was very interested in two cannons he had out on the front porch, which were remnants of his own campaign against the Americans of many years before. So we talked mostly about this old campaign and the weapons he had to use, the stuff that they would cram in for grapeshots -- rocks and nails and such.

I didn't get a chance then of discussing political philosophy with him at all, but he still wore, as did the veterans of the campaign, what they called their "rayadillo" a uniform, a grey striped seersucker type of material, coat and pants -- the uniform of the revoluntionaries against

the Americans. And he still dressed in these old clothes.

But later, just before I left the Philippines, he asked to see me again to tell me of his loyalty to the United States and the reasons for it, and when I went to see him his granddaughter told me that he was too ill to see me, and I never got a chance. She gave me some words from him orally that he had passed on for her to give me, a sort of outline of what he wanted to talk about, but he was in effect saying that there were qualities about the Americans and things that we believed in that he had to share, and that over many, many years, if the Americans stuck to their beliefs and their principles, they would have the friendship of not only people like him but people who had his own beliefs and who lived all over the world. He said that this was the one great thing about Americans, and that most Americans didn't understand that that was the great thing about them. They were looking for the material things that they did, but it was the spirit of their beliefs that was the real thing about Americans.

It was very touching. I had pubicly expressed thoughts in this same vein about the relationship between Filipinos and Americans. So, I couldn't tell whether my own words were coming back to me, or whether he knew of my beliefs and he was trying to reassure me, or what.

Q: He had a book published just prior to his death, where he reaffirmed this same feeling.

A: That's right.

Q: Speaking of resistance groups I want to touch on one controversial topic, and that is the Huks. How useful were the Huks as a resistance organization?

A: Well, they were initially useful in a negative way, in that they tied up a lot of Japanese troops who went in and almost wiped them out initially. This was in '42, up around the Mt Arayat area of Central Luzon. The early Huks had grandiose ideas of forming a great army of resistance and started to do so, with advice and training by veterans of the Chinese Communist 8th Route Army, veterans then in the Philippines.

The Chinese instructors who had been helping the Huks in '42 took a dim view of the Huks' ability to learn the hard tactics and discipline to be good revolutionaries, and to continue existing as a guerrilla army against the Japanese occupiers. The Chinese withdrew from being advisers with the Huks prior to the big Japanese attack on the Huks. The Chinese then started their own guerrilla organization, with about 1,500 Chinese in the Philippines, and called themselves the Wachi guerrillas.

Q: Was this among overseas Chinese?

A: Yes, these were overseas Chinese in the Philippines. The Wachi guerrillas were much more subtle than the Huks. They were mostly information collectors; they were far more clandestine as an organization than a group of guerrillas living in the hills. They called themselves guerrillas, but while they had some terrorists to enforce their

security, mostly they were an intelligence-collecting outfit.

The Huks were clobbered real hard by the Japanese, and it took them some little time to get organized again. In the period when they were gathering up their scattered remnants and coming up with a sounder organization plan, a number of other Filipino groups of guerrillas had grown big, some close by the Huks. They weren't communists, and didn't want to have any part of the Huks. The Huks, of course, had a very definite idea that they were going to become top dogs eventually in the Philippines. They weren't fighting against the Japanese so much, as fighting for their own idea of eventual rule.

So, from about 1943 on, the Huks were spending more time fighting against the other guerrillas -- the Philippine guerrillas -- than they were fighting against the Japanese. (interruption)

Q: We were talking about the Huks. What was their local program, communist ideology aside? Were they truly concerned with the inequities within the Philippine society?

A: One group of them certainly was. The Socialist party members who were from the Agrarian regions of Central Luzon, and had initially joined the Socialist party for idealistic reasons -- and that included people like Luis Taruc, who was their military leader -- initially wanted to rectify injustices to the farmers of Central Luzon who were largely tenant farmers. There were a lot of inequities in land court trials, against tenant farmers. It was a very poor life for anybody who didn't have his own land.

The Socialists merged with the Communists prior to World War II and prior to the Huk movement forming. Among the leaders of the Huks were the Communists, who largely had been city intellectuals, and who I think might have felt for the farmers only as an intellectual exercise, but with nothing in their heart for them at all. Then the ex-farm boys who were leaders still had a feeling in their hearts of wanting to right some rural wrongs. The latter still would try to help the people and do some things for them. Yet many of the people would be repelled by the manner in which the Huks would go after their work, because there was almost constant conflict between an intellectual, cold demand for discipline and going towards the main objective all the time, plus the local folks, who would want to help their fellow townsman or their fellow provincial out there to get some things, and who still had to come under the iron discipline of the Politburo types. This sort of schism in the ranks of the Huks continued throughout the system, and some of the atrocities that took place were by farm boys who feared the iron discipline or had finally become accustomed to sort of blindly carrying out the orders of the intellectuals who were saying, "Well, in effect you can't make an omelet without breaking eggs, and to hell with the bloodshed and so on," which is necessary for a revolution, and rather coldly just going ahead with it.

I recall once Taruc himself was dressed down by the Politburo, and was made to go through "self criticism" and so on, at the height of his power, to show how wrong he'd been to have any ideals that might divert even in the

the slightest way from the Communist ideal, of having some human feelings and so forth. He fought against this, but he finally had to go through a "self criticism" session just to satisfy the Politburo, of which he was a member at the time.

Q: In 1950, at the personal request of President Quiro . . .

A: Quirino.

Q: Excuse me, Quirino -- you were transferred to JUSMAG in the Philippines, to advise the intelligence service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. What were your duties at that time? Could you elaborate on this?

A: The reason for the request was that my prior service in the Philippines had included helping to put together the Philippine military intelligence service, the G-2 of the Philippine Army, after World War II, and helping them get started, so that my role as an adviser in intelligence matters had really started again years before, and was rather well known. So in 1950, when the request came through for my services again, I was in Washington and was doing staff work on cold war problems, with a group that consisted of officers and officials from various U.S. services, civilian and military, other services in the State Department and so on. It was the first attempt of the Truman Administration to come up with cold war doctrines and practices and so on.

The request was brought to me by the then chief of

JUSMAG, Gen Jonathan Anderson. He told me that the Huks had become so dominant in the Philippines that President Quirino of the Philippines felt that the Huks were secretly dominating the capital city of Manila as well as the countryside, to the extent that at night he had armored scout cars parked around his bedroom and so forth before he'd go to sleep. The White House of the Philippines is Malacanan Place, and he had armor around his bedroom inside the Palace grounds. This was how fearful he was of what was happening. He felt that the Philippine intelligence service weren't pinpointing the enemy enough so that he could start coping with their infiltration of Manila and of the countryside.

At the time, in doing the staff work that I was doing, I was far more interested in a subject way past intelligence work itself, (of finding out about the enemy), but was more concerned about, well, once you find out about him, what do you do next?

I was doing considerable thinking on the subject, and producing studies and operational proposals.

Q: To deviate for just a second, was this the special forces concept getting started?

A: No, the special forces was an army contribution to this whole thing, and I had nothing at all to do with the special forces, at the time. The staff had been created initially by Secretary Forrestal, and this was an amorphous sort of an organization that had been put together to cope with something that the United States had never coped with before.

We were all in a way like blind men on the subject.

But I told Gen Anderson, and had the backing of the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Air Force who was Twining at the time, and of the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs was . . . not Robertson, it was before Robertson, but I can't think at this moment who it was.

Anyway with their backing I offered to go on out and do the intelligence work, but also cope with much more than that.

My advisory service with JUSMAG was negotiated in part by Gen Anderson who had been my commanding general previously in the Philippines, and we were close friends, and by the State Department through the Ambassador out in the Philippines, Myron Cowen. They were finally agreed that I would work not only on intelligence matters but helping with the whole ball of wax of coping with the Huk rebellion. This was agreed to by President Quirino and by the then chief of staff of the Philippine Armed Forces, Gen Castaneda.

So I went out to the Philippines with a pretty fuzzy but wide term of reference, you might say, of what my duties would be, and with the blessing of the Air Force and of the State Department, and with both the political and the military support from Washington to see what could be done in that situation.

Q: Was this sort of an offspring of this cold war problem group? Had you by then formulated certain ideas?

A: Yes.

Q: And you felt that this might be a good place to try them out and see if they worked?

A: Well, I had some ideas, and I had written some memos on political warfare and on psychological warfare, and I was trying to get the Army to pay more attention to psychological warfare -- I should say all of the services, but I single out the Army because the Army was the only one that still had a vestige of a psychological warfare organization.

And . . . GARBLE . . . was a member of the Army group that was trying to plan some things to keep unconventional operations alive in the Army, and he and the others were aiding and abetting what I was trying to do, but once I talked to Gen Anderson and it looked as though I was to be assigned to the Philippines, I went to anyone in the services or out who knew anything about psychological warfare during World War II, and talked to the ambassador and the military attache at the Philippine Embassy, and got all of the Philippine military students in the U.S. who were attending various courses in all the services all over the U.S. to come in on their own at the end of their training period. If we could get enough of them together in Washington at one time we would hold a seminar on psy war.

This was held, as I recall, in June of 1950 in the Pentagon, and I had a number of folks who had gone on to civilian life. I remember there was one of the reporters for Newsweek who had been in psy war in Europe, and there were some folks serving with the State Department who had been in the military in World War II, and there were lawyers

and journalists and so forth, who very kindly came in and offered their services, and we ran a three day seminar for the Philippine military students of the U.S. in June of 1950 at the Pentagon. I think it was the first psy war school after World War II.

Actually it was a true seminar, in that the instructors were curious about the Huk campaign in the Philippines, as I was, about what had happened since I left the Philippines in 1948.

We were trying to get up to date on what the problems were. The students were talking, and they in turn kept saying, "What should we do on this thing?" And the instructors were coming up with ideas, and I was getting my first initiation in psy war, and I was listening real hard, and I was asking as many questions as anybody else.

So I put down psy war as one of the things I was trying to carry out along with anything else that would be needed in the way of conventional war against the Huks.

One of the people that I met during this period in early 1950 in Washington was a congressman who was chairman of the Philippine House Military Affairs Committee. His name was Magsaysay.

He was in Washington lobbying for veteran's benefits.

The Philippine Army had sent a colonel along to assist him, and the Philippine colonel -- Montemayor -- was a very close friend of mine. We had dinner together when the two of them got to town, and the colonel told me, "This congressman I am with is quite a man, and you've got to get to know him." So he brought me together with Magsaysay and we started talking about the Huk campaign.

I was tremendously impressed by Magsaysay.

We spent some time together. I was living in the BOQ at Fort Myer at the time. And Magsaysay, this colonel and I sat there in my small room talking till midnight for several nights; we had very long sessions together.

With the impressions I had, I gave a luncheon for as many folks as I could importune in the Pentagon and in the State Department, in high level positions, to come and meet him. We had a session at the Hotel Washington, in the dining room there. I went broke taking them all to lunch, I remember that! I meant to expose them to the Philippine problems as seen by a man who came roughly from the Huk area in Central Luzon, but over on the coast. What he had to say was very important, as he had a tremendous feeling for the conditions of the people, and why the government must try and help them.

He also had taken some very dim views about the Philippine Army and troop misbehavior among civilians. As chairman of the House Military Affairs Committee he was trying to get them to behave better. He was full of realistic ideas.

He in turn was very much impressed at meeting officials here in Washington, so it was a good thing.

When I got to the Philippines finally in September of 1950, I was trying to see about getting supplies out for unconventional operations, including loud hailers, parachutes, and other things, and was having a hell of a time, because the Korean War was going on at that time, and all of our supplies were going to Korea.

I was going to the unknown or the unpopular war, and it took me a long time to scrounge second-hand equipment

and some condemned equipment that I promised to rehabilitate and use.

I finally got some old beach master equipment -- loud hailers -- from the Navy for landing, and promised to put air holes in on their power packs, which otherwise would explode from gas production -- the reason they had been condemned.

So all I did was knock holes in the power packs, and let them breathe a little bit. Despite the tropical rains of the Philippines, they worked and were safe.

By the time I got to the Philippines, Magsaysay had been asked by President Quirino to become Secretary of Defense. So when I arrived in the Philippines, I found a man whom I had been talking to in Washington, whose ideas I agreed with very strongly, who was the civilian leader of the effort against the Huks.

Q: Excuse me, did you or official Washington have anything to do with his (Magsaysay) becoming Secretary of Defense?

A: I suspect that there might have been some influence, but it would have been mostly the influence of Americans in Manila talking about Magsaysay to President Quirino more than anything. I think it would have happened anyhow -- I'll put it that way. I think we might have aided and abetted it a little bit by knowing the man, and saying, when asked by President Quirino, "Yes, he is a good man." That sort of thing, rather than going in and making a deal -- there was none of that. But Magsaysay was very much a person in his own right, and very highly esteemed by Quirino,

and I am sure this would have happened anyway, even if there hadn't been an American interest or anything.

Q: In the Philippines, after independence in the 50s, were the same old families, going all the way back to people who had been working with the Spanish since the turn of the century, still really in charge of what happened in the Philippines?

A: They were in some sectors. The large property owners who were the people that had really gotten along well with the Spanish, were the identical people that got along very well with the Americans, and who were attempting to influence the politics of the independent Philippines, and elected their own political leaders.

However, a rather energetic and aggressive middle class was coming up, taking over the power and attempting to carry out reforms, and they were very different from the old ruling class. Magsaysay was part of the middle class which was on the rise. There were a number of other energetic members of the reformists, including some who were from the old ruling families, but who had gone through the Ateneo College and had been taught by Jesuits -- mostly American Jesuits at the time -- who were given a social conscience in their higher education, and who were very much concerned with the lot of the farmers, the lot of the labor movement, and who were really leaders in the rank of reform movements of all sorts in both political and economic affairs. Some of these were --

Just as I've been saying this I've been seeing the

names and faces of a number of them -- some of these were the younger sons of some of the old families, and some of the old ruling families, including for example some of the sugar barons and sugar planters' families, families that were as reactionary a group of people as I've ever seen, politically and economically.

Some of their youngsters were Ateneo graduates who wanted reform, or who were working in every way they knew to better the lot of the farmer in their own families' sugar plantations to the extent of really going against their families, trying to get land holdings for these people, and start co-ops and sugar mills and sugar planting associations and so on, and do some uplifting by the bootstraps. Some of them were people who hadn't gone to Ateneo, who were from some of the old families, but who were then in ROTC in high school or college, at the beginning of World War II, when the Japanese came in, and as idealistic students had gone with some of their ROTC instructors into the hills to be guerrillas. They had fought all through the war with a dream -- their really idealistic political dream -- of . . . "Well, the United States is going to give us an independent country, and with independence we are going to have a sort of Eden here, it's going to be a Shangri-la type of perfect state, and this therefore is worth a man risking his life for."

When independence came, and then the Huks started their revolt, they couldn't go along with the Huks because they'd fought against the Huks among others during the war. They were seeking some way of carrying out reforms. Groups had joined together and when Magsaysay was appointed secretary,

they said, "Ah, there's our man! He is one of us." He was a guerrilla leader during the war. They joined in to help him. These were people who eventually did things like cleaning up the corrupt practices in Customs, who carried out land reform measures, and were very aggressive in getting compliance to correct practices in the Philippine government itself, in the bureaus and so on, who made the Philippine civil service employee become a true public servant. These were lads from public schools all through the Philippines who had been guerrillas and had their dreams wrecked afterwards by their own government itself and by the Huks.

Q: Sir, we've been talking about Magsaysay and the Philippines. Could you tell me what made the difference with Magsaysay? Why was he able to be so successful so rapidly?

A: That's a simple question with a very complex answer. There are several main parts to the answer about Magsaysay. Let's see if I can split them up and identify them. First, the force being used by the government against the insurrection, the Huk guerrillas, was the Armed Forces, which were being led by officers who had come up through their careers, getting promotions etc., through the normal ways of putting in so much time and sort of getting good marks on their efficiency reports and being due for promotion and winding up as the top leaders without meriting it by solving problems such as the Huk rebellion that they were against. In effect, you had people occupying a leadership role in the Armed

Forces who really weren't very inspiring nor good military leaders. A civilian Secretary was put into the spot who had a very dynamic personality, who was from the troubled area where the guerrillas were operating, had grown up there as a boy, and worked there as a man later, and had represented his district in Congress, so that he knew the political feelings of his own constituency and the neighboring constituencies. Here was a man who felt the problem in his heart as well as in his head, who really started supplying the leadership that was needed by the Armed Forces to take care of the problem.

Q: Did you have to have the right name to rise to high position in the Armed Forces?

A: It was a small Armed Forces, a very small professional group of Philippine Military Academy graduates so there was a very natural family name type of a thing, or rise in promotions -- which isn't necessarily a bad thing, mind you -- it was, in effect, helping each other to get ahead. It wasn't a knowing clique or anything that was out just to be self-serving. I suspect a lot of the promotion was done with good faith and good will. "I know this man and he was very sound when he was a student" and so on and helping him out. A person always thinks better of friends than of strangers and there was some of that. But the end result was the Armed Forces of the Philippines was fighting against the Huks and not doing it very well, getting clobbered and not getting ahead very well. And certainly not being very innovative in what they were doing. Also, certainly not

being a national army that was close to the people. They were further apart than wearing different clothes, such as their uniforms, from the people. They felt themselves to be an army, and an army behaves differently than civilians do and they were very definitely apart from the people. Here, their new leader, a civilian, who came into office, and incidently followed another civilian, of course, who hadn't shown leadership, or the same degree of leadership. This civilian came in from the people where the troops were operating against the guerrilla enemy and made surprise visits to the field, to troop units in operating areas and bawl them out, in effect, in his inspections for doing things wrong that would have the people locally either angry at them for being bad soldiers or laughing at them. He started taking corrective actions on his inspections and showing up so often in these surprise visits that not only the officers commanding units, but also the troops in them, started behaving as though this man would suddenly show up and be watching them very critically to see what they were doing. If they did wrong, he was going to call them on the carpet for it, start taking some corrective actions against individuals personally. Their behavior, even in his absence, was "Well, maybe this guy is secretly hiding out someplace and watching this." They would start doing an exemplary behavior pattern just because of that. At the same time, when there were things wrong within the military family in the way of supplies, equipment being wrong or some very just grievance of troops or officers, something beyond the normal griping of the field command against headquarters, Magsaysay would also listen as well as scold; listen to these

complaints and then do something about it, bring about some reforms and some changes. In this way, suddenly the people who were in the combat areas and carrying on the fight suddenly had a champion of their own, as well as a guy that might bawl them out for doing the wrong thing. They also had a man who would get angry at the right things and move to help them so that they felt suddenly they had a leader who cared what happened to them. This started almost immediately from his first visit out in the field, which was then talked about among the troops in combat areas. Almost from the first, the morale started lifting. Finally they had a guy from headquarters who really cared about what happened to them and who would correct things that were wrong, whether they were at fault or whether the headquarters group was at fault.

Q: How much effect did the American advisors have on pointing out solutions and problems to Magsaysay?

A: Let me finish this other first. That was one part of the change that took place: military leadership. Then it was the civilian that was the military leader. Seeing what was happening, I talked to President Quirino personally. He had invited me in to cabinet meetings to explain some of the Huk problem. I got the President to empower the Secretary of National Defense, Magsaysay, to promote, give spot promotions to people and also to dismiss officers from command when they were doing wrong. In other words, strengthen Magsaysay's leadership powers, and did this against the objections of the then chief of staff of the

Philippine military, and got the support of the top governmental leadership behind Magsaysay, to permit him to be and act as a real leader of the military effort.

Now let me say this. Another factor in the change that brought success was that Magsaysay also was out in the field not only talking to troops but to people in the area where combat was going on, and he was asking questions not only about how are the troops behaving around here, but what is the Government doing here? Do you see the Mayor of a city, do you see the Governor of a Province Government? Do you see anybody from the Department of Agriculture out here helping with irrigation or new seed? And so on.

He would go from these field visits back to Manila and sit in at a Cabinet meeting. As the Cabinet would start talking about economy or allocations to the Department of Agriculture and so forth, here was a man sitting there who would suddenly get mad and pound the table and say, "Mr President (or Mr Secretary of Agriculture or whoever), I have now just come in, and this is what's really going on, and goddamn it you aren't spending the money for the right things, and these things aren't happening, and if you don't do it right, the other side is going to win, and we are going to lose everything. You are going to lose your jobs in the Cabinet, and then the Government, and so on."

So the people suddenly started seeing this man as their champion, as well as the troops seeing that, so that as they griped to him there'd be some changes, there would be a guy from the Department of Agriculture suddenly showing up, who hadn't been there for years. His influence or leadership expanded tremendously, way past the Armed Forces,

so that they suddenly had a man from the capital city who would appear to be genuinely interested in what was happening, and who could be expected to take some action on the things that were wrong, take some action to correct them. And the effect was widespread through the area.

I remember I talked to a guy who was a postmaster of a little tiny post office up in the Huk country, and in a joking way he told me that Magsaysay had made him an honest man. He said, "Every time I sit here and look at my money in my stamp drawer -- it isn't much money, but there's some there -- I start thinking, Well, I don't have much money and my family needs some food, and maybe I ought to swipe some of this. Then I start thinking that that damn Magsaysay might suddenly show up and be looking over my shoulder just as my hand is going into the petty cash drawer, and he'd throw me in jail." And yet he had never seen Magsaysay. But, the stories being told about Magsaysay started getting around.

Now all of this of course caused everything that Magsaysay said and did to be magnified and become much more effective, so that the situation just seemed to be waiting for leadership, and he supplied it.

Q: Sir, as I asked before, in this work that Magsaysay was doing, was he getting advice and guidance from Americans on what to do, and what problems needed to be addressed?

A: Er, this is again a question that's difficult to answer. Magsaysay lived with me in my quarters in his first months in office as Secretary of Defense, simply

because his family home was insecure, and the Huks had sent trigger squads in to liquidate this new leader that was emerging, and I moved him in with me mostly for his personal safety. The difficulty was that we had crowded quarters, so that we had to share a room. He had a bed and I had a bed, and we became roommates.

Most of the advice to him at that period was some very formal advice from the Chief of JUSMAG, Gen Leland Hobbs. The other U.S. military advisers there would advise mostly on the U.S. material supplies for the AFP, and not on tactics or strategy.

My advice to him was mostly initially as a good listener and friend who let him talk out his problems and would single out the salient features and talk back the problem to him as he had thought of it, and what I knew of the scene as well, and putting values on it in terms of principles involved and solutions, and letting him pick the right course, which he would do. But it was roughly the way two friends would talk with each other.

Most of his early field visits were done unfortunately early in the morning, and I like to sleep and sack in. He would go on these visits early in the morning, and he would grab me and have me go along with him, so that I was present at most of his early field visits, and very often during them I could tip him off to what a good inspector would spot and see in a unit, and he would very quickly pick up the behavior patterns, although many of the things that he did and his own behavior were quite natural with him, and he would have done the same whether anybody had been around or not.

He wore sport clothes -- a sports shirt and a pair of slacks on these field visits and he didn't look like the Secretary of National Defense: he looked like some guy out of the province himself.

Q: Did he wear the Barong Tagalong shirt?

A: No, he didn't. He actually in the early days wore an aloha shirt, and usually a pretty wild one, so that he was definitely a civilian and had absolutely no appearance of being a Cabinet officer or a top guy in the Government. Frequently we would fly in by L-5 aircraft close to the scene, and Magsaysay would go on the road and thumb rides for the two of us, and I was in uniform, so that as people would hesitate I would step up and say, "This man is the Secretary of Defense," and I would sort of act as his guarantor that he was for real. And I had to do that with troops as well, who were incredulous when we first showed up, but the fact that I was an officer of the United States Air Force in uniform would vouch for this guy, and it really would cause them to take a second look at him and listen to him. This was in the very early days. He quickly became known, of course.

But I remember that on our very first visits I had to explain to the men and the officers and so on in these units who the guy was. At the time, because of the fighting that was going on in Central Luzon, (down to the suburbs of Manila, the capital city), most of the Americans -- including the U.S. military types -- were not permitted to wander around the countryside, and Gen Hobbs made an exception for me, and let me wander around.

It wasn't until well over a year later that Hobbs finally assigned an officer of JUSMAG to go out in the field. I had a small staff of my own, and I got an exception made for us to wander around where we felt like. I have always felt that you have to see something firsthand to really know what's happening, so I wanted us to be free to move, and we were given that freedom.

Most of the U.S. advisers there in JUSMAG were going between the JUSMAG compound, where they lived and had their offices, a couple of miles up the road to the Philippine Armed Forces Headquarters, where they'd sit in with the G-1, 2, 3, 4, and so on, and with the chief of the Air Force, or whatever, and do office work with them. It was mostly on supply and handling hardware, systems for keeping hardware going and so on.

The new advice really that Magsaysay got -- and that I got myself -- came about, and the only way I can think of to describe it, is by coffee klatsch sessions. I had noticed and learned from getting the Philippine officers together for the psy war seminar in the Pentagon before I went out, that there were a number of Philippine officers, as well as Philippine civilians, who were concerned about what was happening, who had ideas on what to do about it; some of them were wild schemes, some of them were very practical, some of them were very big schemes, some of them were very little things.

So, with Magsaysay living in the house, of course, we had a stream of officers from Headquarters coming in to see him, and he used to start off the day holding office at the breakfast table at my place, and there would be his aides

there, and then there would be some of the staff from Headquarters, who would have to sit and take turns for seeing him. Since it was my house I'd give them coffee and I would sit and talk with them while others were doing business with the Secretary of Defense. I'd be talking with the visitors there, and I also had many visitors of my own, including some of the field commanders of the Philippine Armed Forces, who would come in not to see Magsaysay, but who would come in for 24 hours' leave and wanted a little R & R for themselves. We had been friends from years before and they were used to coming by and telling me what was happening in their areas of operation, looking for a little bit of hand holding or a pat on the head or understanding for what they were going through in combat.

So we would get a mix of Headquarters types and field types together, of all ranks. The folks coming in from the field ran from unit commanders and the big commanders down to sergeants or less, whom I had known before. So we had this tremendous mix of people sitting around drinking coffee in my place, and we were talking shop, because the one thing we were doing was fighting a war against the Huks. A G-3 type would tell about some study they were doing in his staff, maybe trying to figure out what you do with prisoners or something. The field guys would start telling their experiences, and then what the people really wanted. We would actually wind up with a lot of ideas being generated there, which led to such things as the EDCOR, (the rehabilitation of Huk prisoners), of giving them a chance to own their own farms, having a place for housing their visiting families when the prisoners were in the stockade, helping the families

get in to see them, appealing to active Huks to come in and surrender. Many of the good ideas of the Huk rebellion came out of these little coffee klatsch meetings in the house.

What would happen was, as we got to talking, sometimes we'd forget that the Secretary of Defense was sitting there trying to do business a few yards away, sitting at the breakfast table, and we were just around a little corner, talking. Our voices would rise up a bit, and the next thing we knew, Magsaysay would come out and have a cup of coffee with us. So here we were getting ideas presented right at his level as well, you see. And every so often he'd say, "Well, let's try that." Then he would go on down to Malacanan Palace and talk to the President and the Cabinet and get Government backing for a project.

A G-3 type would be sitting there, or a G-1 or somebody from Headquarters, and he would say, "I'll do the staff work," and he'd run back to do it. Field commanders would be there saying, "Give us a chance at that, too, and we'll make the thing work out there." So we would have ideas started and created and sort of staffed out and taught in a very informal work session, but then almost immediately solved as far as the staffing of the thing was concerned, and all of the paperwork and the backing and so on, and we would get something generated very quickly. This is an unusual way of working things out that I have used in many places in the world, including Vietnam, and I can assure you that it works. It's the most simple and the most natural way of working in the world, far more than the formal meetings that Americans hold with foreigners all the time.

In these meetings, there was nothing formal. These

were a group of people who knew each other and who were relaxing over a cup of coffee and were sitting close enough to each other so that they didn't have to get up and make speeches or anything. A guy could lean back in a chair and have his feet propped up on a table or something, and sound off on something in a very relaxed way. The guy sitting next to him could do the same, and ideas would really spring forth, and also the very practical ways of implementing these ideas would come up.

Q: That sounds very good.

(end of side 1 of tape)

Q: Sir, after the success of Magsaysay, the Huk rebellion was virtually crushed, but today there seems to be a resurgence as the Huks become again more active. Problems in the Philippines seem to be getting worse instead of better. Is there any simple reason that you can give for this?

A: The Huks themselves -- the ones that Magsaysay defeated -- were defeated as much for political reasons as for military reasons. Their slogans, their recruiting, and their organizing reasons as stated were all met politically by social actions or political actions of the Government and of the armed forces against them, so that they had no reason to fight again. Now the rules that the Government and the military followed were the rules that are stated in the Philippine Constitution and in the Philippine Electoral

Code. They are part of the rules that the Filipinos themselves have set to govern themselves, and they are good rules. So, in effect, the Huks were defeated as soon as the people on the Government side actually followed their own rules, and once they did that, the Huks had no reason to overthrow the Government, because it became a government of and by and for the people.

So, if the Philippine Government had been true to its own rules right along, and if it had been a government of, by, and for the people, no people would try and overthrow it, because it was their own, and there are orderly ways of changing things with it.

So the only way that a group of rebels could start again would be if the people felt that the rules weren't being followed anymore, that there were privileged exceptions to the rules, and that there were just grievances that the people had, to be solved in no other way except by armed force, so that in effect the following that the Huks would have today, by and large, would be from people dissatisfied with the way the rules are worked out by the Government.

Now, this of course clearly indicates where a blame might lie, and also where a solution might lie. In other words, if the Government itself really was true to its principles of governing, as laid down in the Constitution and in the Electoral Code, then there wouldn't be any grievances really that couldn't be met by peaceful means and by people trying to solve the problems that the country faces, and there wouldn't be Huks fighting against the constitutional government. The Huks would be primarily what they were when they started up again in their first

resurgence -- frankly bandits and racketeers. Starting again, they were made up mostly of criminals, not of political fighters. Pretty common stickup artist type guys who became protection racketeers, mostly close to the big U.S. bases there, where they had nightclubs and beer parlors, and gals hanging out in houses where they would let the criminal element grow up with protection rackets or girl rackets, gambling and all the usual things.

The Huks went from that criminal boss activity -- and they weren't politically motivated initially in their resurgence, but gradually, as people were looking for another polarization to find some solutions to their grievances, and of course getting into the political field, as the Government wasn't satisfying their political needs, a lot of the crooks and so forth then started becoming political. Initially they did it like a political Boss Tweed or something, in Tammany, of turning out the electorate again for money mostly, and for influence of congressmen and so forth, who would get elected from there, but with a very bright remnant left of some of the Communist Party folks, the theoretical end of the thing, saying, "Here is real opportunity knocking, and I don't care if a man is a crook and so forth, he's got some power in a place where there is dissatisfaction." And they started moving in on the thing and giving it a political polarization again, as the old Huks had. But the initial basis of this was very different than that of the original Huks, in that now they were really racketeers.

I know that the U.S. Air Force -- the 13th Air Force at Clark Air Force Base -- I am sure that their security files are filled with things like simple theft, armed robbery and

the racketeering and protection rackets, the gambling, girls and so on, in nearby towns, close to the base, that gave the start to guys who now command this that and the other thing of a Huk armed force. The genesis of this thing is quite different than the Agrarian reform movement of the initial Huks, when the Agrarian Socialist Party of Central Luzon merged with the Communist Party of Manila City, the water-front laborers and other "proletariat", to initially field an army of original Huks during the Japanese time. So that today's types are now a militant expression of dissatisfaction with the Government. And I think the solution again basically is one of government reform and so on, and giving some justice to all, as a way of solving the problem again.

The recycling theory might be correct, since the area where this is happening today is the same area where the agrarian malpractices caused some trouble earlier, and where a sort of a scrappy population had taken on the first American pacification forces during the so-called "Philippine Rebellion" at the very beginning of this century, but had also fought Spanish armies during the old Spanish colonial days. There had been big fights around and in places which have since been the same places where the later Huks stood and fought against the Philippine Armed Forces, and where today's racketeering Huks are operating. All the same area.

So there might be something sociologically -- an association between the man on the land and the poor soil or something, not letting him get a good living, a man's feeling of frustration from birth almost that he was not

given a fair break in life, might well cause this. But again, if there is a government that says, "We are your government," and actually behaves that way to the point where he feels that his government is very responsive to his problems and his needs, and that he can work with it, then they can start meeting on some of the problems that exist. It's obvious that they aren't doing this, and therefore he is taking the other way to get redress for his grievances.

Q: Are you being consulted at all by the Philippine Government?

A: No.

Q: That's too bad. Sir, in 1953 you joined Gen O'Daniel's mission to the French forces in Indochina. What was your capacity, and what effect did you have on American-French relationships after you'd been there for a while?

A: I was picked out on sort of the spur of the moment. I was in the Philippines when the O'Daniel mission was en route to Saigon, and at the last minute, so to speak, O'Daniel asked me to join the mission and come along with him.

When I arrived in Saigon with him the French were quite surprised that I was there, and a number of the staff officers close to Gen Navarre, who had just assumed the French command, had known of what I had been doing in the Philippines, and were very worried about me as a revolutionary type who might stir up the natives against the French. So, as far as my relations with the French, I might say it was one of watchful waiting on their part, always fearing the worst.

However, Gen Navarre seemed to welcome my arrival. He was putting together his plan, as well as O'Daniel doing a report on what the French needed. So between Navarre and O'Daniel I was assigned the task of coming up with thoughts for Navarre on the unconventional annexes to his plan.

"Unconventional", in this wise, were the annexes on what they called Maquis or guerrilla forces that were operated by the French, (in 1953 they were largely Maquis, among the Montagnards of the mountain tribal people of the Indochina states), and psychological warfare by the French and Vietnamese forces primarily, and of intelligence collection, particularly combat intelligence.

Then, by chance, I got in with the French airborne paratroopers, and worked out some thoughts with them up in the regions of the North Headquarters, at Hanoi, with the French airborne and Gen Cogny's staff on these airborne operations, based from the Red River delta perimeter.

So the annexes contained sort of a mixed bag of clandestine Ops and secret missions and intelligence collection type of things. Working on these plan annexes permitted me to get in and talk shop with the French officers who were involved with all of this. It was on their own operations and ideas on how to better them, and often on how a field command could get more help from Headquarters to let them do a good job. The French Army was no different than any other army in that respect. Frequently the Headquarters staffs would look on what these particular unconventional types were doing as something sort of esoteric and not really military and not actually needed, and would give them short change in the way of airlift or weapons or whatever else they needed. So most of the people that I was working with would

immediately tell me how misunderstood they were by their own higher command, and would have a long list of needs. But the problem about these needs always would be, "Can you get them to understand what I am trying to do and support me?" So that usually the No. 1 problem was the understanding that was lacking -- the understanding of the needs that they had. There was need for more understanding.

Q: I've heard that one of the problems with the French was that they were sort of road-bound, and really didn't like to operate in small unit actions in the jungle. Is this true or false?

A: Well, it's largely true, not entirely so. They certainly had a number of French officers who were serving for very long periods of service in Indochina, much longer than any U.S. military have ever served there. There would be officers I'd run into that had served 8 or 9 years there consecutively, 10,000 miles away from home and away from their families in France, with no home leave and no break from their service, who were dedicated to the struggle that they were in, and would become very close to groups of people on the ground there, who had a very genuine affection, I think, for the people, and who had finally worked into types of service that would permit them to serve in among them. Many of the French Maquis leaders and advisers who were in with the tribal people had been adopted by the tribes, and they shacked up with native gals, and were partically part of the tribes that they were serving in. And they certainly were far from being road-bound types.

The same was true of a lot of the French airborne types out there, who were sort of the cream of the French professional fighting men, whose one major complaint to me was that none of the generals seemed to know how to use them correctly. And again there was a plea for understanding of the airborne role, where they wanted to get away from the sort of old fashioned conventionality of their leaders and really do some envelopement of the enemy from the air and surprise him, and get into places that they couldn't get to. But their main complaint was that they were usually used as an airborne unit designated as a support unit and dropped in to a support position to infantry that moved into an area by truck. They said that it would have been just as easy to move us in by truck as the infantry that we were going in to support. They were right, of course.

What they wanted to do was to get away from the normal type of thing, get out beyond the normal infantry tactics, and drop in behind the enemy some place, and operate in a much freer fashion than they had. So taking just this one example of their airborne operations, which they later -- after I was there -- started using in a less conventional way, I would say from what they told me and from what I saw that by and large the French were road-bound. Not only that, but they were thinking in terms of positional war when they put up forts, to guard first of all bridges, and then to guard villages, as well as fortified zones for guarding rice producing areas.

All of this was positional warfare in their thinking, against an enemy who wasn't thinking positional warfare at all and who would cross their lines at night and do other very unfair things to the conventional types. This enemy

moved around them and continued a war of movement against the French who were thinking positional war. French use of roads and equipment actually, although it looked like a war of movement, kept them into narrow corridors and zones, and was in essence a positional warfare concept, with an enemy going on foot and not paying attention to it.

Then, when the French got real daring and would try the unconventional, they would essentially do commando type raids. They would go in and shoot everything in sight, burn down what was there, and destroy means of support to an enemy. Since the enemy was basing his support among the people, this meant burning down the homes of people, blowing up bridges that people would use, and leaving a scorched earth behind that would make all of the people on the scorched earth hate those who had brought it about. So, in effect, these commando type of raids which were looked on as very unconventional operations, actually were causing great harm in a very conventional sense to the cause of the French, and were letting the political cadres among the Communist troops go in and recruit the villagers and farmers to pay back the enemy for doing these horrible things to them. The people would say, "Yes, I'd like to pay the French back."

Q: Was Dien Bien Phu supposed to be an air head for activities in the rear? In other words, although it had a position in terms of protecting Laos, was it also supposed to act as a focal point for guerrilla and <u>true</u> unconventional activities in the rear of the Viet Minh?

A: Dien Bien Phu was intended to prove the theory that, if

you could ever get guerrilla forces lured onto a killing ground where you'd have enough fire power to liquidate the guerrillas, you'd win the war against guerrillas. In effect this was supposed to be a very large trap, to lure the Viet Minh guerrillas onto a killing ground, where you could have not only the guns, but you'd have airstrips and a way of mounting air power quickly against them tactically, and you'd get an enemy lured into a place where you could kill him. The fact that the enemy also looked at the French putting up positions there and were saying, to themselves, "Gee, these guys are getting on to our killing ground," didn't mean that the guerrillas . . . well, the guerrillas made better use of this theory than the French did, who had conceived it and tried to implement it.

Now the first thing that the guerrillas did was to take the high ground overlooking the forts at Dien Bien Phu. Unfortunately for the French, the killing ground wasn't the troop killing ground that the French had picked, since the high observation points weren't manned by the French in the mountains around there. When the enemy occupied the high mountains surrounding Dien Bien Phu, he immediately got observation of the French, so that as the enemy brought up artillery, it was really the first time that the enemy could ever observe his artillery fire, correct it, and make it very effective. So the first thing that caught the French by surprise was Viet Minh artillery, for the first time coming in and being very accurate and knocking out the French guns and the French forts and the French troops.

Instead of correcting that, which got more and more difficult as time went on, the French never got the enemy

off of the high point where he could observe what he was doing, and using long range weapons. They tried air power against it, but the bombing was very poor. It certainly didn't drive the enemy off the high ground. If anybody ever said it was effective, it wasn't effective enough to change that part of the situation.

The enemy cut the roads and started a seige. With artillery support, accurately observed fire, he then mounted ground attacks that started succeeding, while the French kept beefing up their bad positions down actually in the bottom of the bowl in the hills -- they kept putting more targets in for the enemy to hit. There were very brave men on the French side. I know that they used to go around at the headquarters of the French Army, like in Saigon, announcing that they were getting an airlift into Dien Bien Phu, at that time that the airlift used the airstrips at Dien Bien Phu, but these later were knocked out, and reinforcements would have to jump in by 'chute, so that it was a one way trip for the guys who would go there.

Mind you, many volunteer reinforcements were headquarter types, hardly the bravest men in the world ordinarily. But the call would say that they could take, say, 50 guys in. They'd say, "We want volunteers," and everybody assembled there would take one pace forward and volunteer, everybody. Then they would select the 50 that they could take that morning. But it was a one way trip for these guys, and they knew it. They knew that they'd jump in and there was no way for them of getting out again. And yet every day there were volunteers. These were very courageous guys. You can call them foolish or anything else, but you certainly have to admit that they were courageous.

Q: Giap has intimated on occasion that Dien Bien Phu was a lot closer thing than most people realize. Is that something he just does for the dramatic effect, or was it close?

A: Well, certainly a lot of the enemy were killed in that, but as far as a close thing is concerned I talked to some of the French who were taken prisoners at Dien Bien Phu and were later released. When they were en route through Saigon on the way home to Metropolitan France, they told me not only about the battle but about what happened afterwards. As prisoners, some of them were taken by the Viet Minh down to Dien Bien Phu to recreate the battle for the official movies of the Communists on what happened there. They were to reenact the defeated French, you see, and as they got back to Dien Bien Phu in their old fortified positions, they were amazed to find them under water.

What had happened was that Giap occupying the Heights at the beginning of the watershed had diverted streams, any water flows and gullies, with crews of laborers digging new streambeds, to direct all the water down the watershed and onto the French fortifications. When the rains came, it was just like turning on a faucet in a bathtub. The French forts were down at the bottom of the bathtub, and all this water just came down and flooded the area.

So, if it was a close thing it must have been political pressure on Giap to win a victory by the time Geneva met. The Geneva negotiations were then taking place, with the political representatives of the Viet Minh present at Geneva, the pressure was for a victory, useful in Geneva bargaining, rather than any physical thing on the battlefield, I think. So it's a political timing "close" thing.

I personally think that if I had been a political boss of Giap I would have started asking him, "Why did you have so many guys making suicidal attacks and get creamed in attacking the forts, when you could have held on just a little bit and ground off the French there?"

Q: I guess from what you said that it must have been a political thing.

A: It must have been, and that again says an awful lot about an enemy, and the same enemy that we are fighting too. Where politics fits in his thinking -- it's all part of the same war.

Q: Sir, you mentioned earlier that the French soon began to dislike you very much, particularly right at the 1954-1955 time period. Could you explain why this was?

A: I am not certain that I have firm answers on this. I felt at the time -- and I still suspect it might be true -- that they were looking for some reason why they were defeated in Indochina. Being human they did a very human thing. Instead of looking in a mirror to take a look at the guys who were there and were defeated, they started looking elsewhere, and thinking that certainly some outside influence somewhere must have had a hand in this, and at that time I had become close to Diem who was the new Prime Minister that was sent in by Bao Dai, and so they figured that somehow or other I was turning the Vietnamese against them -- against the French, that is -- and therefore must have somehow or

other had the Vietnamese defeat them during the Franco-Viet Minh War, even though I wasn't there except for a brief visit in '53. They wanted a scapegoat.

In their emotionalism on this, they even started claiming that I was trying to start World War III. I have never been able to come up with any rational explanation of why all this was. I do know that it was present, and that some of the French magazines and newspapers reflected that. At the time, they saw me as a very villainous figure who was working against the French, which simply wasn't true. One odd thing was that the French had agreed already to the independence of Vietnam, and yet I was in part blamed for wanting the Vietnamese to be independent of the French. It was something that had been agreed to by the French themselves long before I showed up on the scene.

I was blamed for a number of other things that frankly were already statements on paper, proposed by French politicians and leaders in France, and had been agreed to internationally. And yet it struck the people on the ground that somehow or other this was all new. It's irrational as far as I am concerned.

A Swiss journalist who was there at the time tried to explain it to me one time. I am not sure his explanation was valid, but he said that the French are very emotional people, and when it comes to the Vietnamese it's a little bit as though it were a man who had a mistress, who had gotten tired of the mistress and was leaving and said the mistress was free. All of a sudden, one day, he sees his ex-mistress going by in a new Cadillac, and here is this damn other guy -- meaning you, or an American -- who's got the

mistress there in this Cadillac going by, and even though the man had already given up his mistress and so forth, he says, "The only way that guy could get a girl like that would be with a new Cadillac." So among other things, the French claim that I was buying the friendship and loyalty of the Vietnamese, and every time that they would ever mention an activity of mine, it would usually be that I was out with a suitcase full of piastras -- millions of dollars worth of money -- buying somebody. This wasn't true at all, but they could only see that the wealthy American was out buying off the people to dislike the French.

Now the fact that a lot of the people out in the countryside didn't like the French -- that even if they hadn't been Communists, they were fighting as nationals against the French for their independence, long before I ever showed up on the scene, and having this burning desire to be free and independent were thus anti-French -- that didn't seem to enter into French thinking at all. All they could see was that when I became friends with these same people, being an American and <u>not</u> wanting them as a colony or anything, and simply moving around among the people and trying to help them as far as I could out of friendship, seeing me close to the people they tried to ascribe some kind of reason for this, so they figured I must be paying them, which of course I never did. I frequently was accused of that.

One of the accusations came about in a formal, official briefing one day. I forget who it was -- I think it was the U.S. Army Chief of Staff from the Pentagon who was visiting Vietnam. There was a military briefing for him

at MAAG Headquarters, I had been busy on staff work, so I showed up at the briefing a bit late and sat down in the rear row, just to hear what was going on. As I sat down, I heard a French officer (who was part of the briefing team) briefing these visitors from Washington, describe about Col Lansdale -- myself -- being down in the country trying to buy the loyalty of a Hoa Hao rebel by the name of BA Cut at that very moment. He went on about how stupid I was not to know that BA Cut had lured me down there just to get the suitcase full of money that I had. He added that Americans such as myself were the thing that was ruining everything in the relationships between the French and people like BA Cut and other Vietnamese. When he paused for breath I spoiled the story. I got up and asked, "Go on, tell me, was I killed or not this afternoon down there?" Here he was, thinking I was at 100 miles distance, and believing it, and telling this story. He got so mad at me he shut up and left the room. Later, he wouldn't speak to me at all. Apparently the French believed these stories. Now here was a highranking French professional soldier, giving an official briefing to a high ranking professional soldier from Washington on the situation, telling just sheer fantasy, and undoubtedly believing it as he told this fairy tale. The fact that I not only wasn't carrying money, but wasn't present in the area where he said this was happening, and was physically visible present many miles away and in the presence of these people, never stopped the French from keeping on telling <u>that same damn story</u>! I was blamed and accused of this on and on and on, all the time I was there.

Now what would cause people to do that? And how to

get them to stop? I don't know. It baffled me. Even when it was demonstrably untrue, the stories continued.

I don't think it would ever get beyond this.

I think the French were just hurting very very much from their defeat, and they were just hoping that they weren't to blame themselves, or were hoping somehow or other that some dirty foreigner some place had really caused that harm to France. And there I was, quite visible. So I became the butt of it.

Q: Did you subsequently play a role toward Diem that was similar to your role with Magsaysay?

A: Well I was seeing Diem almost every day. (interruption)

Q: Sir, you were saying that you were seeing Diem every day. What sort of relationship evolved?

A: Initially, I saw him the day after he first returned to his country as Prime Minister in '54, I watched the way he came in, seeing the mistakes that he made in the way he came into the City of Saigon from the airport. He disappointed the many, many, many thousands of people who'd lined the streets to welcome him. Somebody had advised him, apparently, to be wary of the people. He came by in a closed car maybe 60 MPH, with a motorcycle escort. Nobody got a chance to see him. The people were emotionally upset by Communist victories and thought that here was a man who was going to save them. They wanted to cheer him, see him, demonstrate, and he didn't give them a chance to do so. I figured

he must be getting some very bad advice from his family and from Vietnamese friends. Thus, I wrote a memo that night, suggesting some actions that Diem might consider following. I checked them out the next morning with the ambassador and the chief of MAAG who told me to go ahead and show it to Diem. I looked up Diem at the palace and introduced myself, giving him these suggested ideas. Mostly, they were what I had learned from the Vietnamese people. They covered a wide range of subject matter, of things that the Vietnamese people were aspiring for and hoped would get a response on the part of one of their leaders.

He kept my memo, and he invited me to stop by and see him again. I did so. A relationship finally evolved where I would sit and talk to him almost every day -- not every day, but almost. Very frequently. As he started running into terrible problems, and as these problems mounted, I became sort of a safe confidant for him to admit the size and nature of some of his problems and his own worries about being able to resolve some of the things that he was coming up against, and use me as a sort of a sounding board to try out ideas and so on. In turn, I tried to give him the help that I had given Magsaysay, responding by summarizing what he had said, but in a form stressing the principles involved and enumerating and the factors that a man should look at and examine very closely in order to make a decision. By laying this out for him verbally, it would help him clarify the issues in his mind, so that he could then make a decision. He apparently found this quite useful. This was the basis of our relationship.

Also, part of my advice at the time was to get Diem --

a rather shy, retiring type of a person who was happiest when he was secluded in his room or office or study, reading books and documents and being a scholar, -- getting that type of a person out into the provinces and streets talking to enough people to get an idea from people from all walks of life of what they were thinking and hoping and doing, meeting them on a ground where he could be eye to eye with them and they wouldn't be trying to satisfy a great leader or something, but where they would be talking between human beings. So a lot of my early pushing at him was pushing him into visits around the countryside and seeing what was going on.

Fortunately, the people were hungry for Vietnamese leadership at the time, and responded very enthusiastically to his appearances among them. As a matter of fact, he was much more popular than any historian has ever given him credit for being. I have photographs of him in those days, and just taking a look at the crowds that came around and the look of delight and sort of affection in their faces and in their eyes as they met this man and talked to him, you can tell that they were happy to see him. This, in turn, meant a great deal to Diem and bouyed him up a bit, so that he started enjoying getting out and talking to people, and who wouldn't? It's very flattering for a man to be loved, and the people loved him, so as he became more and more sure of himself. The more he was learning of what the people really felt and what their needs were, they were becoming more and more candid with him.

This remained largely true for the extent of my service in Vietnam. I left at the end of 1956. When I left, I

left a very popular Veitnamese leader running things, a man who was being very responsive to the needs of the people. I thought the show was on the road when I left.

Things did change afterwards. But he was a very likeable human being when I knew him in those years, and a man who went through some terrible crises of leadership and opposition and decisions that were very, very trying in a human sense, that would have been trying on any leader. Anybody in that spot would have sort of gone through the same fire that Diem had to go through. He was handed tragic, vast problems that were enough to wreck any human spirit, but he had the courage and the integrity to handle the situation. I came to have great respect for him by watching what was happening right close to him, and the way he met his problems. We became close personal friends.

Q: But by 1963 it seems that he had lost this personal touch. My own observation there was that he was a stranger in a palace, and unapproachable, and very afraid people surrounded him in Saigon.

A: National leadership and the power that goes along with it of course has corruptive elements in it. Unless a person is very, very aware of corrupting influences at work, he becomes the victim of his own power. In Diem's case, he had a brother who gathered information for him, and initially -- I am talking about his brother Nhu, his younger brother -- the man had political organizations based in labor unions that had very accurate, true information on the way that labor and some of the farmers and farm union organizations

felt about things. So this was very useful. But again, I think Nhu became corrupted by running an espionage net or an intelligence net, and always figuring that he had the latest inside word of what was going on. He became more assertive as he gave this invormation to his brother, and both of them started substituting the information that came in to them from these nets for their personally going out and finding out things first-hand. Evidently they didn't realize that this was putting up a sort of a glass wall between themselves and the people. With it, they started getting lost. They became in effect the tools, unwittingly so, of the people supplying the information, who all too often, seeing their own power, started aiming for their own more and more selfish ends, telling them what the situation was in terms benefiting self-interest, or even inventing things just to keep the payments coming for supplying information. It was a very corrosive type of situation -- a leader permitting himself to get separated from the people. And Nhu was an intellectual. I suspect that he became convinced that he was the brightest guy that ever came down the pike, and pretty soon talked himself into thinking that he was brighter than his brother Diem, and became a bit impatient with his brother on his brother's caution over some moves and plans and started forcing his own opinions on Diem more and more.

I last saw Diem in '61 (in the fall) and even at that period he was a very different individual than the man I had left in 1956. When we met in '61, it was the first time that I can recall, ever, that his brother Nhu sat with him while we were talking about very personal things,

in sort of personal friendship confidence between ourselves. His brother Nhu would sometimes answer the questions that I put to Diem, and I would have to explain and say, "I am talking to your brother, not to you. I asked Diem what he thought." And Nhu kept supplying the answer for his brother and Diem would agree with him.

This was a strange relationship that I hadn't seen before.

Just what had happened there I don't know. But changes are what you get sometimes when you go back and see old friends after years of absence. Then you start wondering, "What's the guy been up to that he ever developed this way? He is a different person." I just don't know. By the time of his overthrow and death in '63, I think the change had become set in concrete, and had probably gone much further than anything I ever saw. From what people were telling me about Diem in '63, he sounded like a stranger to me from the man I knew. But what caused that, I really don't know.

Q: About 1961, I guess, an organization was formed, known as Jungle Jim, which became the predecessor for the development of Air Force counter-insurgency forces. Could you, sir, fill us in on the evolution of the separate Air Force units dedicated to counter-insurgency?

A: That came about during the Kennedy Administration, and I would say that the true genesis of that as far as an official act would be came from the President personally, that is Kennedy. Kennedy had asked the Chiefs, in a meeting with him to take action that would give him some capability

of handling unconventional warfare. Each of the Chiefs responded somewhat differently. The Army already was ahead of the game, by only a few months with their Special Forces. The Special Forces originally had not been organized for counter-insurgency, but had been a force intended to work with guerrilla forces in support of regular forces in a conventional war, (probably World War III).

Near the end of the Eisenhower Administration, some of the Army Special Forces people had been encouraged by me personally -- and some had come up and worked on my saff in the Pentagon -- to take a more active role in counter-insurgency in an attempt to understand and to offer services wherever the U.S. became involved. The Army at the time had been very reluctant to approve a doctrine of that sort -- their doctrines on this had been developed at Leavenworth, and Leavenworth hadn't come up with an Army counter-insurgency doctrine. The doctrine was done very informally down at Fort Bragg. Was it Bragg? Yes, where the Special Forces Center is.

Q: Yes. (cross talk)

A: It had been worked out by the Special Forces staff there, partially by those that were on temporary duty in my office in the Pentagon. I encouraged some of the Cabinet members and high ranking military in the Army to go down and visit Bragg at the time. Officers at the center, bless their hearts, had the courage to stand up in front of the VIPs and give the doctrine that they were going to follow from then on, which was hardly official. This was right at the end of the Eisenhower Administration.

We got word of this over to the President-elect, and his task force, who were working on the problems of government, including the military and the defense role and things. Kennedy personally liked this one aspect very much, and he picked it up and showed an intense interest almost from the day he was inaugurated.

So with the Army doing some things, he wanted the other services to see what they could do. The Marine Corps said they had a very simple solution -- that all of the Marine Corps was designed to fight counter-insurgency, so the President needn't ask any of the other services to develop anything, but to just turn the problem over to the Marine Corps and they'd take care of the whole thing for him. The President said, "Thank you very much, but I still want the services to develop their capabilities." And with that each of the Chiefs came back from the presidential meeting to the Pentagon and went to work on the problem, one of them being LeMay.

Curt LeMay, as far as I know, was the impetus or the initiating point within the Air Force itself for Jungle Jim and for coming up with something in response to the President's request. I know that I talked to him about it at the period, and from the way he talked I had always taken it for granted that it was his own personal sort of child, you might say, in the Air Force and that he was intensely interested in seeing it formed and be given a chance in life.

I know in the fall of '61 he was very anxious to get units into Vietnam to start working with the Vietnamese Air Force, and start training the Vietnamese Air Force.

He had asked me when I went out there to get the agreement of the Vietnamese Government to invite the U.S. Air Force to send in such a unit. This was done, in the fall of '61, when Ross Milton (General T.R. Milton) and I went to Vietnam with Maxwell Taylor and Walt Rostow. I obtained the request from President Diem and Ross Milton picked out their first station, at Bien Hoa Air Base.

Q: In 1962 -- the United States Air Force scheme for keeping paratroops and the troop carrier aircraft on alert as a central measure in meeting the insurgency. (Pause)

A: What was the first part of that?

Q: Keeping paratroopers and troop carriers . . .

A: Well, I felt that having an elite group in the sense of people trained and screened for skills to meet the type of minimum effort for a maximum effect that the U.S. could exert in one of these situations, was a very wise action for the U.S. military to take. I wasn't entirely certain that just designating airborne units as a group to meet a situation would prove a valuable solution or an effective solution to it, but having an American unit able to get into a position very quickly did make sense to me.

So I was personally for such an action, although with the qualification that they had to be truly skilled in the types of actions that would be asked of them.

I felt then and still do that this was a vital as well as a major qualification.

Q: To what extent, sir, was the United States Air Force's view of counter-insurgency in Southeast Asia clouded by preoccupations with modern hardware, air strike roles as opposed to air lift -- and I'll come back to these one at a time -- the inter-service competition, and our experiences in World War II and Korea.

To get back to the first, were we too involved with trying to get the most modern hardware into the theater?

A: No, not really. The first aircraft being considered were actually close to being obsolete as far as what the then modern Air Force was considering, and there was considerable expression of thought, I know, by some of the Air Force generals who were concerned with these matters up in the Air Staff, about keeping our equipment to a nature of the means that the recipient country could afford to have. It meant that aircraft would be either passing out of the U.S. inventory, or being less costly to maintain, or to man or to equip, or at least to keep flying.

I know that in the early days there was nowhere near the love of gimmickry and advanced ideas and development of new weapons and so forth that very shortly after became fashionable.

Q: Do you think we tended to concentrate too much on the air strike roles as opposed to, let's say, air lift and psy war operations?

A: Perhaps so. There was one element of the Air Staff working on this matter at the time, I know, and they used

to talk to me. Mind you, I wasn't a member of the Air Staff at the time, but was on the Secretary of Defense's Staff.

But in talking with some of the officers, I recall some of their thinking, on examples selected by them from past experiences. The one that they mentioned again and again was a British experience in what used to be called Mesopotamia, in which the RAF allegedly had the major role in keeping down dissidents by simple use of air power, by both air strikes and threatened air strikes, and air patrols by fighters and bombers over dissident-ruled areas.

Q: That was against the Mad Mullah, wasn't it, or something like that?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: In the desert.

A: It's still a moot point among the British as to whether the RAF accomplished that, or whether some of the political types and some of the ground types who were involved in negotiations and other matters didn't have as key a role as the RAF. But I knew that in the Air Staff, at the time there was strong consideration given by some of the Staff to the fact that air power properly used might very well offer <u>the</u> major or <u>the</u> key factor in solving an insurgency, if given the proper chance.

Q: What was your reaction to this?

A: I felt that air power had a part in it, but I had made it very plain in my talks with the Air Staff people, and then some of the early study groups that were trying to work on these problems for the President, that I felt that a key factor in countering insurgency was to get native leaders to the right places at the right times. Thus, the main use of air power could be to give airlift to these individuals and bringing them from their desk in the capital city out to the field, getting them to the proper places at the right time. I felt this way not only about air power, but also I was in opposition to the ground force type of weapon such as artillery -- against anything that wouldn't have a personal contact with the enemy, but might be easily subject to misuse.

Q: Do you think we also leaned upon the experiences of World War II and Korea as a guide to our actions, or did we sort of try and learn everything all over again from the beginning?

A: Well, there were some World War II experiences that were cranked into this, particularly by some of the folks who had operated either in the African desert or in the Middle East, and those who had been in the China-Burma theater, who had been in on the "hump" flights or had tried to work air support missions for the Chindits, for Merrill's marauders, and other unconventional forces on our side operating against the Japanese in Burma. But I really am not an authority on what the thinking was inside the Air Force and on what was being brought to bear at

that time, since I was a step removed from the Air Staff in my work for the Secretary of Defense, and only used to learn these things through informal sessions with some of the officers involved in my office.

I was trying to encourage a lot of thinking by the Air Force and the other services on this subject, and was mostly pushing them to rely on very common sense, less flamboyant solutions to some of the problems.

Q: Sir, could you tell us something about Air Force civic action activities in Vietnam from the early days of your involvement until you ceased to be current with the scene?

A: I know very little about the early days of Air Force civic action. I don't recall ever discussing the subject with any Air Force officers. I might possibly have from some of those who would have visited me in the Pentagon, but the people who asked me to talk about civic action were the Army and the Marine Corps. I don't recall any such request ever from the Air Force until many, many years later, when I was a civilian in the Embassy in Saigon. Along about 1967 the Air Force civic action people in Vietnam were having a meeting in Saigon and asked me to sit in with them one afternoon, which I did. I was a little surprised then that the Air Force was that interested in the subject, as I had known very little about it before then.

Q: Sir, on something 180 out from civic action, what were your feelings once we began our bombing campaign in North Vietnam?

A: I was initially quite opposed to the bombing, since it broke almost every rule that I knew of for success in a political war which was being undertaken in Vietnam at the time. I expressed myself rather plainly on this at that time to some of our top U.S. officials in the Administration, by pointing out the advantages -- politically -- that it gave an enemy who had been having trouble with the people up to that point. As with the Luftwaffe attacks in Britain, it permitted Ho Chi Minh and some other smart political leaders in Hanoi to do a Winston Churchill and prove that an enemy was attacking them and therefore the people must hold together and unify and defy this enemy. So, in effect, we were doing something that would look good from our rules of warfare, but in terms of the actual war that was being conducted in Vietnam, we were letting the aggressors and our enemies take full political and psychological advantage of something. We gave them a very priceless way of maintaining and strengthening their leadership at the very time when we wanted it weakened. So I think that any move that would make leaders strong at the time we are fighting them, certainly isn't a very wise move. I don't think that the advantage that was talked of at the time -- that we would give a boost in morale to the South Vietnamese -- was worth the price, and certainly the bomb damage that was wreaked on North Vietnam was hardly worth the price to arouse a whole nation to oppose us and to actually get the energy and the will to want to see our defeat, which was the real cost of that attack.

Q: Now we've entered a period of withdrawal from Vietnam.

How do you see in the final scenario the resolution of American involvement in Vietnam?

A: I think that we are going to have a slow erosion of U.S. involvement, that is going to have to take place over the years, instead of the very brief period now being talked about in Congress and in the press and by demonstrators; we might well get out of a combat role and stay on in an advisory and support role; we might even get out of an air combat role and still stay in an air support (role), meaning transport role, for a long time, but there will be some sort of American presence in Vietnam that will have elements of military and economic assistance of some sort for a very long period.

As the Vietnamese awaken to the fact that they have to stand on their own feet, and take care of their own problems, there will be a very healthy series of growth actions coming out of that, in which the more they are forced to do, the more they will learn that they can do. They will become aware of their own capabilities, and thus able to carry out things.

So I think we might well wind up with more American personnel and help in Vietnam than the situation will need, say a year or two years from now, if present developments continue the way they do, and if the political scene keeps developing in Vietnam the way we hope it will. That is, if the Vietnamese elections for President and for Congress this year are carried out in a way so that the Vietnamese people themselves will feel that they have elected a leadership that truly represents them, and are people that

they want as leaders. Then I think many other factors in the war will start changing favorably towards us, and, as we pull out troops, we will discover that the Vietnamese are demonstrating far more capability in handling their own affairs than any of the Americans can really appreciate in their sort of projections for the future today. If there is cheating and a bad scene in the elections in Vietnam this year, I think that in the almost immediate future -- say a year or two years from now -- they will find tremendous political dissatisfaction on our side in Vietnam, and a very good chance that there will be more coup attempts or other very unsettling, unstable events taking place in Vietnam that can only assist the present enemy. This will lead to problems where we should have Americans in helping, but the Americans couldn't help, and would not be permitted to by public opinion here at home. It will be too strong for a President or for a Congress or for any executive department to give aid then, so -- what I have just said is really contingent on the political factors. They are really the main feature on the horizon for the immediate future in Vietnam, far more than the actions that took place in Laos or Cambodia, or any of the other actions that so much public attention has been on.

Q: Thank you very much, sir.

End of Interview.